

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

September 9, 2004

Members Present: Jean Haggerty, Chair; Doris Holden, Treasurer; Elsie Fetterman; Hank Peirce; Susan Whitbourne, Barbara Sutherland, Joan Keochakian, Al Byam

Absent: Frank Lattuca

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Interim Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Program Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant) and Ferne Finger (Amherst Lunch Site Manager).

Others: Gerald Weiss (COA Liaison & Select Board Member), Marge Babb.

Welcome

Meeting called to order at 9:03 AM. Jean welcomed all members and guests. All COA members and staff introduced themselves and gave a brief background. Ferne Finger thanked the funding committee for raising the money for the van and thanked Al Byam for all his help with getting the van ready for use. As an individual she thanked the COA and the staff for all their work in unity towards the same goals. Marge Babb, community member and friend of the Senior Center, gave a brief description of her background.

Minutes of Meeting

Minutes of July 8, 2004, were reviewed and accepted as written. Nancy thanked Maura for taking the minutes. Karen will now be taking the minutes for the Council meetings.

Senior Trust

Treasurer's Report:

Doris Holden reported that the van donations she has deposited to date total \$3,980. The total assets are \$88,048. The Certificate of Deposit matures on September 17th. She asked if the COA members want to roll it over for another year. The interest rate was at 1.25% and as of today it is 1.35%. Elsie suggested that Doris look into what the rates are at other banks. Doris will do so. The Treasurer's Report was accepted as written.

Overlap of COA with the Senior Trust / Establishing "Friends" group:

Nancy: COA members cannot be involved with any fundraising because it is a conflict of State Law. We need to organize a subcommittee called "Friends of the Senior Center" to do fundraising. COA members, who are also all members of The Senior Trust, will seek input from the COA Finance Subcommittee as to how to manage and use the money that is raised. Everyone needs to ask people if they are interested in being on the new fundraising subcommittee, "Friends of the Senior Center".

Jean: Janice Denton wants to be on the "Friends" subcommittee and there are many former members of the COA and the community who will be interested. She is looking at perhaps a group of about 20. She anticipates that invitations will be sent out to interested people to come to an informational coffee gathering. Jean would like the COA Finance Sub-Committee to work on organizing and enlisting community membership in the "Friends" group. Joan Keochakian has been involved with organizing other such groups and she volunteered to assist in this process. Elsie recommended that the Council contact the Library to see how their "Friends of the Library" committee works. She also recommended having Town Meeting Members in the "Friends" group. COA members Hank, Susan, Joan, Elsie, and Al along with former member Janice Denton, will work together to gather "Friends".

New Policy Regarding Paying Scholarships and Revision of Authorization Form:

Nancy asked that the Senior Trust Payment Authorization form be revised to allow for exemptions, from entire COA official vote, for routine expenditures such as reimbursement for scholarships paid for clinics (not to exceed \$200). This will expedite the return of money fronted by the Senior Center Club account. **The Council approved this change.**

MCOA's Annual Conference:

The Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging Fall Conference will be held from Tuesday, October 26th to Friday, October 29th at the Burlington Marriott in Boston. Nancy invited COA members to attend on Wednesday, October 27th and the \$50.00 registration fee will be paid by the COA budget. Nancy and Maura will be attending. Doris and Joan expressed interest in attending.

Request for Money from the Program Grant:

Nancy requested a transfer of \$2,000 from the Senior Trust Program Grant to the Senior Center Club Account. She explained that because of a number of unforeseen bills and new expenses (such as the cable hookup for the

computer gallery) and the deficit that occurred in the Highland Valley Account, replenishment of some of the money is needed for the Senior Center Club account. Elsie and Barb, the Highland Valley Representatives wanted to know what can be done to ensure that the Senior Center is funded adequately by the Town. Nancy explained that two years ago the lunch program went in the red because the HVES lunch program was still paying at least one of its deliverers a small hourly wage and almost all of the drivers were getting mileage for use of their cars. In March, when Roy Rosenblatt (who had been reviewing budgets) notified John about the deficit, it was already in the red by \$4,000. Ferne and Nancy, who had recently taken on supervision of this program, had to switch the HVES delivery force to totally volunteers and try to find people who would forgo the mileage. The Center Activities line item of the COA budget was tapped out to cover the HVES deficit and the Senior Center Club checking account was used to cover all program expenses through the end of the fiscal year (June 30th). The Senior Center Club account has really never recovered. After John left last fiscal year, there were a number of outstanding bills discovered that hadn't been made for a number of months and the Senior Center Club had to cover these as there wasn't enough money left in our Center Activities account to cover them.

Elsie: The Amherst Club has money for awards to local organizations who apply. Perhaps this is something that the Senior Center can apply for. **The COA approved the request for \$2,000 transfer of funds from the Program Grant for the Senior Center Club.**

Staff Reports

Annual Reports:

Nancy reported that the COA and the Senior Center Annual Reports for the Town have been completed. This year these are two separate reports.

Dept. of Elder Affairs Annual Report:

COA members received a copy of the FY 2004 Department of Elder Affairs Annual Report for the Formula Grant completed by the staff. Nancy explained that this report was a tremendous amount of work and requires a lot of record keeping. The Senior Center staff is working on a better way to gather these statistics so that next year the statistics will be easier to access for the report.

Office Staffing:

Nancy announced the "good news" that this week Barry said he will find non-COA money to:

- 1) Pay for the consultant and
- 2) To make up for the loss of the \$20,500 Congregate Grant support for Maura.

At this point, Elsie asked (with great emotion): "Where did all our personnel money go? Why do we have to rely on grant money for our basic staff? Why don't we have Town money for a full time social worker?"

Gerald Weiss asked what staff positions were lost. Nancy explained that the Senior Center previously had an office staff of seven people (John, Nancy, Barbara S., Barbara T., Maura, Maureen and Hermia) and now it is staffed by three--herself, Interim Director/Program Director; Maura Plante, Social Worker/Program Director; and Karen Erman, Administrative Assistant. There is an "Extra Help" line item, funded by some of Nancy's salary, to pay for Barbara Slovin to work on an emergency basis.

Maura explained her position at the Senior Center. She is the only Social Worker and she also spends one day a week working for the DAAC. She has so much day-to-day work that there is no time for planning. Nancy explained that four people have retired from the Department and a Green Thumb worker has left. Karen has taken on the work of Maureen, Hermia and Barbara Taylor, Nancy is now both Interim Director and Program Director. (This position is the only position left that is totally funded by the COA budget.)

Nancy explained that Barry has committed to paying the following items out of her unused \$52,947 salary: 1) A new copier for the Senior Center (\$10,000+), 2) Restoration of \$2,000 to the Center Activities Line Item, 3) Adding an additional \$1,000 to the Office Supply Line Item, 4) \$23,965.38 to pay John Clobridge for his vacation, longevity, sick leave buy-back, etc., and 5) To pay for extra help--Marlene Barnett will be coming to work for the Senior Center three days a week to help with the work load beginning on September 20th for (at least) seven months.

Nancy encouraged COA members to be involved and express their thoughts and advocate for the Senior Center as appropriate during the upcoming budget preparation period. Barry will be coming to the October meeting to discuss funding and staffing issues. Al Byam stated that the FY '06 budget is now important. We need to make

our needs clear and advocate strongly. Nancy asked that the COA members sign up on the sheet passed out to be on a subcommittee to help in the areas of Wellness, Transportation and Finance.

HVES “Caring Community” Grant:

Maura reported that the Senior Center has applied for a “Caring Community” grant for the “Grandparents as Parents” Program. This group meets weekly and it is a support and education group for kin who are caretakers of their grandchildren. The grant will be for funding for speakers for this program and for childcare and activities for the children during the meetings.

Subcommittee Reports

Nominating:

Doris felt that it is better that a staff member take the minutes for the COA meeting so that COA members could participate. Karen will be taking the minutes. The COA voted that Frank Lattuca will be Vice-Chair and Jean Haggerty will serve as Chair.

Funding:

Hank reported that the total donations to date received for the van amount to \$4,042.

HVES Report:

Elsie: Highland Valley has a wonderful website for information. Please use the website. There are many resources there.

Jean: She has applied for a grant from Highland Valley for a wellness committee at Ann Whalen.

Transportation:

Nancy reported that the senior van has taken five trips. Two very capable and personable drivers have been hired, Denise Czerwec and Matt Superba. People like the van and say that it is very comfortable. For the winter, the van needs to be under shelter. The Fire Chief has agreed that the van can be parked at the North Fire Station but a tent-like structure is needed. The cost of this structure is \$2,000 and Nancy needs to order the structure now. It will come in pieces and then either Town workers or volunteers will be needed to put up the structure. Also, a battery charger is needed as the van will not be used every day and the battery will run down, especially in the winter.

Nancy said a State trooper found fault with safety specifications of the new van. This came up when Matt Superba took his driving test using the van. After several phone calls, she found out that the trooper was using school bus regulations.

COA member choices for committees in FY '04:

Members were asked to sign up for a subcommittee.

Nursing Center Update

Until the results of the consultant are known, Cheryl Smith, Director of the Nursing Center, will be transferred to the Health Department so that she will have medical supervision for her clinical work.

Since 1998, an anonymous donor has given \$10,000 for the salary of the Nursing Center nurse. All other expenses come out of the Senior Trust (i.e. supplies). Our staff discovered recently that the \$10K has not completely covered this wage. Cheryl's salary was actually negotiated by John at the top of the pay scale for this kind of position and is higher than the Town's Public Health Nurse. The staff calculated that in order for Cheryl to stay within the \$10K salary, she must take 12 days off without pay during the year. Sick time, vacations, holidays and personal days would all count toward this time. The supervising department approving overage would be responsible to pay for it. The Health Department might actually opt to hire Cheryl themselves for work there. Another option is the Trust can agree to fund additional salary.

A recent letter from the donors said, “In the long run, more diversified support for its (nursing center) operation should be promoted.” Other ways to fund the Nursing Center should be explored. Each spring, John Clobridge used to meet and talk to the donors (plus one or more COA members?). The COA needs to decide who will meet with the donors. Jean suggested that Susan look into this. Susan will talk with Nancy about the Nursing Center and its history. No vote was taken on whether or not the Trust will fund any overage of the \$10K for the nurse's salary.

Other Business:

Doris asked that everyone take a moment to remember Eveline Sears who passed away. Eveline was a beloved founder of the Amherst Senior Center and made many contributions.

Doris has received four donations to the Senior Trust in Eveline's memory and thank you letters will be sent out.

Next Meeting is October 14, 2004, at 9:00 AM

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM